



One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

March 8, 2018

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The State Department's failure to use \$120 million that Congress provided to counter and deter Russian propaganda is unacceptable. This is the latest example of the Trump Administration both ignoring the will of Congress and letting Russia off the hook for its attack on American democracy.

In 2016 Congress provided the State Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) \$60 million for 2017 and 2018, respectively. It was reported this week that the Department has neglected to use any of these funds, leaving Russian information warfare unanswered by the office Congress charged with pushing back on this aggression.

After months of pressure from the House and Senate—including a letter from the Ranking Member of this Committee which went unanswered—the Department is trying to play catch-up, but the Administration's dithering has taken \$60 million of the funding off the table because it was not used in time. It remains unclear if or when any funding will be put to use. This baffling inaction has failed to bolster America and our allies at a critical moment.

Additionally, the Department's hiring freeze has prevented the GEC from bringing on the experts needed to counter and deter Russia's information operations system. Although the GEC's dedicated staff is working hard on other efforts, it still does not have the specialized personnel required to adequately track and counter Russia's disinformation and propaganda campaigns. The Administration's lack of interest and unalloyed failure to use the means Congress provided to protect our country are stunning.

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Senior Administration officials have told us all we need to know about this situation. CIA Director Pompeo and DNI Coats have made clear that Russia is continuing to interfere in American elections. Admiral Rogers, the Director of the National Security Agency, revealed that President Trump has given no orders to stop that interference. And in the face of this urgency, you told a Fox television personality that it is "very difficult" to stop Russian meddling. It's unclear how you reached this conclusion considering the Administration hasn't even tried. The Administration has not imposed the sanctions passed by overwhelming bipartisan majorities last summer, and the President has continued to deny Russian interference while attacking our own intelligence and law enforcement communities.

Indeed, the record over the last year suggests this White House is willing to accept another round of Kremlin interference like Putin's intervention that sought to help the President's 2016 campaign.

When you appear before our Committee later this month, we expect to hear why you have not responded to the Russian cyber threat with the robust tools Congress provided, and we will listen carefully for evidence of substantial State Department progress on implementing a robust campaign to counter and deter Russian propaganda.

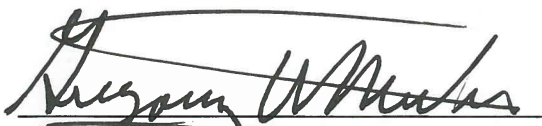
Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee



BRAD SHERMAN
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific

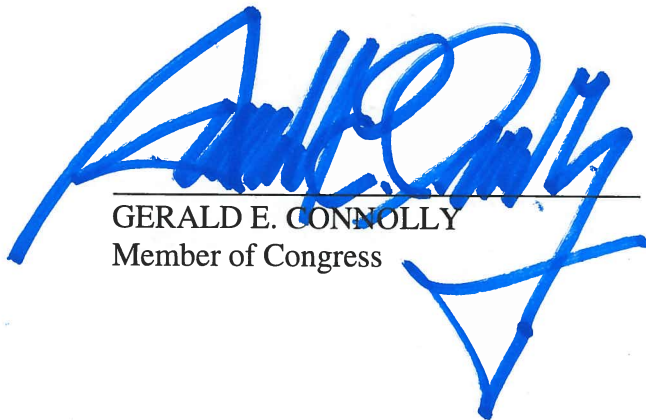


GREGORY W. MEEKS
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and
Emerging Threats



ALBIO SIRES
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere

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Member of Congress



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Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North
Africa



KAREN BASS
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health,
Global Human Rights, and International
Organizations



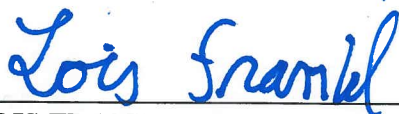
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Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Terrorism,
Nonproliferation, and Trade



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Member of Congress



AMI BERA
Vice Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee



LOIS FRANKEL
Member of Congress



JOAQUIN CASTRO
Member of Congress



ROBIN L. KELLY
Member of Congress

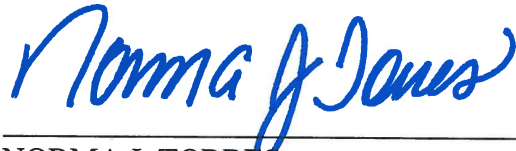


BRENDAN F. BOYLE
Member of Congress

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